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ences and seek the common element that is left. This is Herbert Spencer's method by which he finds the essence of religion to consist in a recognition of the inscrutable mystery of things. The second way seeks the essence in the idea that is successively, progressively, but perhaps never completely manifested in the series. The first method attempts to explain the higher by the lower—the second method finds the explanation of the lower only in the higher. The first seeks an elemental essence; the second, an ideal essence. The first might be denominated the logical method; the second, the biological method. It is a pre-eminent merit in Höffding's work that he has adopted the second method. Whatever may be the final estimate of his hypothesis, he is worthy of great credit for his effort to determine the ideal essence of the religious consciousness.

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Hereditry and Social Progress, by SIMON N. PATTEN. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1903. pp. vii, 214. \$1.25.

Modern thought accepts the seeming paradox that evolutionary progress owes its origin to adverse conditions of environment. Thus, current biology and economics hold that the moulding factors of evolution are operative chiefly under conditions which are unfavorable to the life of the organism. And current religion teaches that morality thrives in adversity and decays in prosperity. Professor Patten maintains that this conception is fundamentally false. The main argument of his book supports the counter thesis: Progress starts from a surplus, not from a deficit. The acquired characters of one environment create a surplus of energy which evokes new characters; these in turn impel their possessors to seek another environment, in which the maximal benefit of the improved equipment may be reaped.

But how are the new characters evoked? And how do they become permanent possessions of the race? The accumulated surplus is made up of perishable goods only. To make progress secure, this temporary surplus must be transformed into permanent conditions or into mental traits. If such a transformation is impossible, progress can never be more than merely temporary. If it is possible, not only will a permanent progress be assured, but the process of the transformation must portray the course of social progress.

Professor Patten finds that the transformation actually does take place, and in the following manner. The successful artisan provides more food, leisure and protection for his children. Brought up under these conditions, the children acquire greater vitality, increased energy and a fuller development of their natural qualities. The new characters thus acquired beget a disinclination to the humdrum occupation of the father. New environments and new occupations are sought, in which the acquired characters may be utilized. The children become physicians, lawyers and clergymen; and move into a higher class in the social scale.

The essential point, then, in all social progress is the creation of a social surplus. This surplus is not permanent in form but is constantly in circuit, both biologically and economically, always disappearing but ever reappearing in new form. Its successive phases recur in the following order: First there is produced a surplus of energy through the employment of acquired characters; this surplus is next expressed in secondary characters; then a use is discovered for these secondary characters, in which the whole species can share; and finally the species moves into a new environment where the secondary characters are necessary.

The characters acquired by an individual or a generation, are not transmitted directly to its descendants. They gradually become in-

grained in the social fabric and are perpetuated in customs, habits and traditions. But the characters themselves must be reacquired by each succeeding generation. Then, too, it is found that the gradual acquisition of new characters is attended by a one-sided development of the individual. It becomes the function of education to restore uniformity; this it attempts to do, not by eliminating the weak, but by developing and strengthening them.

In the lower organisms, on the contrary, progress is made by means of elimination. But in human society differentiations are conserved and harmonized by a division of labor or of function. Nor are human contests fought out to the death; they are usually decided within the domain of wealth. One party yields when its property is endangered or destroyed, as in modern warfare, or when its material resources are shown to be inferior, as in industrial struggles between nations or classes. Hence, in modern times at least, natural selection acts upon man only indirectly, through his material equipment.

Professor Patten makes a good deal of emotion as a factor in progress. When a herd of deer is attacked by lions the emotion aroused by the slaughter impels the survivors to change their habitat, and possibly their habits and food as well. Emotion narrows choice, limits the range of food, and consequently causes an arrest of development. In the case cited, the adjustment to new conditions, ushered in by the emotive factor, occurs much more rapidly than could be effected by natural selection. National disasters act as a similar check to human progress, in virtue of their emotional effect.

The author assumes, as a matter of course, a thoroughgoing parallelism between biological and economic evolution. The result is that the discussion not infrequently degenerates to mere argument from analogy. Many of his biological conceptions are weird in the extreme: *e. g.*, his conception of the brain as an inclosed ovary, male in woman and female in man (pp. 105 ff.), and his theory of "reduction." Nor is his psychological doctrine less startling; *e. g.*, his treatment of memory, emotion and visualization (pp. 95 ff.). But these lapses do not invalidate his general position. Indeed, these parts of the discussion might have been omitted from the volume without serious loss.

Though the argument fails at times to carry conviction, the treatment has at least the virtue of originality, and will, doubtless, stimulate further discussion.

J. W. BAIRD.

The Virgin Birth of Christ. An historical and critical essay by PAUL LOBSTEIN. Translated into English by Victor Leuliette. Edited by W. D. Morrison. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1903. pp. 138.

This remarkable and interesting little work is to be welcomed in its plain English dress. The author's general conclusion may be stated in his own language if the Virgin Birth of Christ "ceases to remain a real fact, it stands out as the characteristic creation of the faith of the church." "In the light of this two-fold investigation the tradition of the miraculous birth of Jesus vanishes away, or rather resolves itself into a myth created by popular devotion and destined to explain the Divine Sonship of Christ by his supernatural generation. Thus viewed, the conception of our two evangelists is an important landmark in the development of Scriptural Christology. Every attempt made to reconstruct on a dogmatic basis a notion now forever overthrown by exegesis and criticism, has but betrayed the inextricable contradictions of popular orthodoxy. We are, therefore, doing a valuable service to faith by confining the traditional doctrine to its religious import. By laying bare the imperishable truth contained in the Christian symbol, we are remaining faithful to the mind of Jesus,